

## CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter provides guidelines for enhancing communication within the family system. Although the chapter is titled Family Communication, the guidelines which are included pertain to spoken communication between all individuals. The Children's Service Worker can draw upon these guidelines as he/she interacts daily with those within and outside his/her caseload.

### **What is it?**

We all communicate, and we all have our own idea of what good communication is. The problem comes when our idea of good communication and someone else's does not agree.

For instance, we may think we are communicating well when we're allowed to talk on and on. The people on the other end of what we're saying, however, may see us as lecturing or droning on. That wide-eyed look we think is interest may really signal a mind that has tuned out and taken our listener far away.

Experts tell us that communication is the process or way we transfer information from one person to another so that it is received and understood. Received and understood are the words that are key.

You can't call it communication if one person talks and another appears to listen. It is only communication, real communication, if information is received and understood. Communication is sharing ideas, feelings, thoughts, and viewpoints.

Family communication is complex because it includes sending, receiving and interpreting information. Sometimes the interpretations are not what the speaker intended.

Communication experts tell us "You can never not communicate!" That statement stresses the role of nonverbal behavior in family conversation. Most family members learn early how to communicate verbally, with the spoken word, and nonverbally with actions.

When someone says, "You can never not communicate!" he or she means that even though we may not be saying anything with our mouths, we are probably "saying" a great deal by our actions and the way we listen. In fact, the nonverbal response may be much more than we realize. Actions often speak louder than words.

In the book Secrets of Strong Families, Nick Stinnett and John DeFrain write that "Good communication isn't something that just happens among strong families, they make it happen."

You could say that communication is a two-way street with lots of traffic signs and billboards. To really communicate you have to be able to read the signs as you drive and watch for oncoming traffic.

### **Why Communicate?**

The advantages of positive, open communication are many.

Family members who have learned to communicate effectively with each other have learned to talk and to listen carefully, to share information and to be understood. They know and feel each other's joys and sorrows, and they can express their own joys and sorrows through the sharing of their thoughts. They have true empathy with one another.

Family members who communicate well know how to laugh together. They enjoy a sense of humor, which brings enjoyment to their lives. They are able to express their feelings, differences, likenesses, and hopes for the future. They practice positive ways of handling conflict so problems are brought out into the open, discussed, and solutions are found. They know how to be open and expressive with each other.

When family members listen carefully to each other, they communicate an unspoken but powerful message, and that is that they respect each other. Careful listening says, "I respect you enough to listen to what you have to say."

Learning and strengthening communication skills doesn't mean an end to all problems; it doesn't mean that strong families don't have conflict because they do. Family members get angry with each other, misunderstand one another's motives, and sometimes just plain disagree.

But when they can communicate, they are able to get their differences out in the open where they can talk about them, discuss the problem, and negotiate a satisfactory solution agreeable for everyone. That doesn't mean the solution will give all involved exactly what they want - it just means they will have reached a common ground upon which they can agree.

Good communication provides security and safety. People know where they stand in the family. This leads to a feeling of "wellness" which is essential for strong families. Good, effective communication doesn't stand alone. It walks hand in hand with family appreciation and time together.

### **What Makes Good Communication?**

Good, effective communication has four essential parts:

- Listening - By listening you demonstrate concern for all aspects of the speaker's message;
- Rephrasing - This is restating the basic message in fewer words to be sure you understand the speaker;

- Probing - This is using a question or statement to direct the speaker's attention inward to examine his or her situation, feelings, thoughts or problems in more depth;
- Positive speaking - Positive speaking is a caring communion, a way of showing that the positive aspects of relationships are valued and emphasized.

All four of these skills together are powerful when used with people you care about.

Often we take family communication for granted. We may think we communicate well just because we are a family, or because we spend a good deal of time together. But each of us can learn to communicate more effectively.

### **Listening - What is it?**

Listening is vital to good communication. It strengthens the relationships between family members by showing that you care about and respect the person speaking. It increases understanding and can lead to empathy, shared experience and affection. (We use the word empathy instead of sympathy, which can suggest pity.)

To listen with empathy means to be able to put yourself in the other person's place so that you understand his or her joy and pain. When you're a good listener it shows you're concerned about all aspects of the speaker's message. Really listening involves paying attention to what the speaker says both verbally and nonverbally. It is hearing with the heart as well as with the ears. It is considered by many to be one of the greatest gifts you can give another person.

Listening often includes some verbal response, but it is largely a nonverbal skill. Don't think of listening as something you do just for others. There are some great payoffs for those who listen. For instance:

- You gain knowledge. You can learn a great deal of new information about people and about ideas when you listen. This increases understanding of what is meant, as well as of what is said;
- Listening stimulates the speaker's expression of ideas and feelings. When this happens the speaker directs the flow of conversation and has a sense of responsibility for what takes place;
- You become a trusted person. How many times have we heard the statement "to have a friend you must be one"? This applies to families, too. When you listen well you're building trust with the speaker, who feels relaxed, comfortable and secure in your attention;
- Good listening encourages cooperation from others. When you genuinely give attention, you encourage others to react genuinely as well. Sincere

interest in your family members often leads to respect and cooperation. This, in turn, can foster a sharing of ideas and a sense of mutual accomplishment;

- You can reduce tension and prevent trouble. That can benefit both you and the speaker. Your careful listening gives the other person a chance to "let off steam" before he or she reaches the boiling point. If you learn to listen carefully before you speak, you often can head off many minor problems before they become major ones;
- Listening can be fun. Active listening, or listening with your heart as well as your ears, can increase your enjoyment in everything you do. You may actually learn to hear on higher, more positive levels of communication.

### **Elements of Listening**

Good, effective listening has two key elements:

- Listening and observing; and
- Letting the speaker know that you are listening and observing.

For many people, learning to listen effectively is difficult. Many societies emphasize speaking, and the other end of the communication is often ignored. Yet good speaking requires good listening; communication is not a one-way street.

Sometimes we think we're listening when we're not. We may be preparing to say something when the speaker pauses, or we may be thinking about something entirely unrelated to what is being said. That is not effective, active listening. In fact, that is not listening at all!

When you give someone the gift of active listening, you are seeing as well as hearing; observing as well as listening. Such observation is a good way to learn more about what others are trying to tell you about their feelings.

Sometimes your observations will detect a difference between what a person says verbally and nonverbally. Since nonverbal behaviors, including the expressions on our faces, the way we hold our bodies, the gestures we make, are often more difficult to control than what we say, they can be a more accurate reflection of what we're feeling.

That isn't always true, however. Cultural and personal uniqueness make a difference. If there seems to be a difference between what is said and what is shown, but you're not sure what is causing that difference, don't be afraid to ask. It's better to clear up a misunderstanding at once, rather than let it mushroom.

We noted earlier that the second element of good, effective listening and observing is to let the speaker know that you are doing so. Ways to do that include using eye contact, appropriate posture, and accurate spoken and nonspoken responses.

### **What is Good Eye Contact?**

For most of us it means looking the speaker in the eye. It doesn't mean staring at him or her; it doesn't mean never glancing away. What it means is to do what is comfortable for you; meet the other person's eyes in a direct manner that is natural, interested and concerned. Since its purpose is to put the speaker at ease, you want to make sure that your eye contact is neither so intense nor so distracted that it makes the speaker uncomfortable.

It is important to remember that direct eye contact is not always appropriate. Each person is unique, and some people are not comfortable meeting another person's eyes. Then, too, some cultures consider direct eye contact as hostile, disrespectful, or bad manners. Be sensitive and respect individual and cultural differences. If you're not sure what the speaker is comfortable with, ask!

### **Appropriate Posture and Gestures**

Your body language says a lot about how you think and feel about the speaker. It is best to select a posture that is comfortable for you, and to use gestures that are natural and fit what is being said. Experts say open, rather than closed, postures are best to open up communication. (Closed postures include folded arms, crossed legs, and turning your body away from the speaker.)

Gestures, too, are an important part of listening, but it is important not to overuse them. The most common gestures are those of the face, arms and hands. Facial expressions can show joy, excitement, anger, sadness, and many other emotions. Often a smile is most successful in making contact between listener and speaker.

When studying body language, it is important to realize that each person has his or her own idea of personal space. We all have certain distances we like to maintain around us. Often these distances depend on the situation and the other people involved. Often they're cultural.

Sensitivity is important here. We need to watch how the speaker uses space around others, and we need to respect that space. When we do not, it can have a disastrous result on communications.

### **Appropriate Verbal Responses**

When we're listening, our spoken responses need to be short and direct; words that show we're following what the speaker says. Such phrases as "um hmm," "I see" or "that makes sense" show we're in tune with the speaker. Another effective response is repeating words that seem to have special meaning to the speaker.

### **Examples of Listening**

A husband has this to say about his wife: "Some people won't believe this because they think you have to be a fountain of wisdom to help people and they don't see my wife,

Dottie, in those terms. She is, though, the most important advisor I have. Not because she tells me anything, but because she listens. She could teach classes on listening! She doesn't interrupt - except maybe to ask a question to clear up a point. She'll let me get it all out. So many people don't listen; they're just waiting for you to hush so they can begin talking."

And a wife has this to say about her husband: "When we first married my husband could outtalk anybody. He could go on for hours, it seemed. I'd wait for him to stop so I could say something, and he never would. I'd have to interrupt and say my piece fast to be heard at all. I began to be embarrassed by his monopolizing the conversation when we were with friends. And frankly, I needed him to respect me enough to listen to me once in a while. It took a while and some harping, but he saw my side and, with some work, he's learned not to monologue. We used a timer at home to take turns - kind of like you do with children. I'd set it for three minutes and he'd talk; then I'd get the next three - with no unnecessary interruption. As he learned to listen, we put the timer away. We also developed a secret signal - for use in public - I'd adjust my left earring to mean he needed to listen for a change. Once he was telling a good story and stopped abruptly in the middle. Then I realized I had reached up to brush my hair back and he thought I'd sent a signal. We had a good laugh about that one later."

### **Rephrasing**

Rephrasing is restating the content of what the speaker said. It focuses on spoken messages. As the listener, you rephrase to reflect the meaning of what was said. You can do this by simply repeating what the speaker said, with specific emphasis on certain words. Or, as is more common, you can rephrase by repeating what the speaker said in fewer words than he or she used.

Remember, rephrasing focuses on the speaker's words. It is important to avoid adding meaning, which was not intended in those words.

What are the payoffs of rephrasing?

- It builds understanding. Rephrasing tells the speaker you, the listener, understand, or are trying to understand, what he/she is saying.
- Messages become clear and precise. Often it helps the speaker clarify his or her meaning when words are briefly repeated back. This can help the speaker deepen the content of the discussion.
- It avoids confusion. Often your rephrasing points confusing content out to both you and the speaker. This helps identify differences and can lead to compromise and understanding.
- The listener's ideas can be validated. When you rephrase what the speaker says, it allows you to check out your own understanding of the speaker's spoken message. This way you can clarify things, rather than assume them.

- It demonstrates caring and concern. A caring and concerned attitude on your part can produce a sense of mutual respect and trust between you and the person who is speaking.

### **The Parts of Rephrasing**

Rephrasing has three parts. They are:

- Listening to determine the basic message;

To use rephrasing to help in communication you must make certain judgments to determine the basic message. The speaker's content may include many thoughts, and you usually must choose only one to rephrase.

Be careful not to try to make your choice too soon. With patience, a basic message will appear. As the listener, you must use judgment to rank different ideas or statements, beginning with the one you consider most important. Don't worry if your order is different from the speaker's; he or she will usually let you know! If that doesn't happen, don't be afraid to ask.

- Restating accurately without adding meaning;

It takes practice to be able to restate a message accurately so that you don't suggest a meaning the speaker did not intend. After practice you may be able to combine several basic ideas in your rephrasing. This is helpful because it focuses the content and joins similar ideas. The best way to restate a message is to use words similar to the speaker's, but fewer in number.

- Checking it out to insure accurate understanding.

Checking it out is a way to make sure you're rephrasing accurately. As listeners, we make assumptions about the speaker's statements. Our assumptions can twist what the speaker is saying. For that reason, it is important to check out our rephrases. A simple, effective way to do that is to add phrases such as "Is that correct?" or "Is that what you said?" or "Is that what you mean?"

### **Examples of Rephrasing**

In this example, Ann checks out what is wrong with Bob: Bob has been irritable all evening. He snapped at Ann a couple of times over nothing and has been silent for most of the time. Of course Ann is disturbed over this. Naturally she feels hurt and resentful toward Bob. However, such resentment is based upon the assumption that Bob's irritation and negative behavior are directed toward her. This may not be the case. Ann checks it out and says, "Bob, you've been acting angry and upset tonight. Is it because of something that I have done or is it something else? Do you feel ok?" Bob then shares with Ann that his budget has been cut at the office, and because of the

budget cut he has to terminate a friend who works in his office. While he hates this, he has no choice and is very frustrated about it. If Ann had not clarified the meaning of his communication, she would have misinterpreted Bob's behavior.

In this example, a husband demonstrates the need for rephrasing: "My wife's family uses a good deal of indirect messages and they understand each other. My family has always been pretty direct, so you can imagine the interesting misunderstandings Sue and I had until we figured this out. She'd say, 'Are there any good movies downtown?' and she'd mean, 'I'd like to go to a movie.' I would answer the question she voiced by telling her what was playing. I was surprised when she got angry or sulked. Eventually we figured this pattern out. She's better about saying, 'I'd like to...' instead of hinting, and I'm better about checking to be sure I understand what she really means."

### **Probing**

Probing is the use of a question or statement to direct the speaker's attention inward to examine his or her situation in greater depth. It also can highlight the way the listener and speaker relate.

Probing questions require more than simple "yes" or "no" answers. They are open-ended, encouraging the speaker to respond with more awareness and intensity. It is important to remember that probing questions center on the other person (the speaker, when you're listening) and what is being probed. The more your probing statements or questions relate to exactly what the speaker is saying, the more effective they will be.

Like good listening and rephrasing, probing also has its payoffs. They are:

- Probing statements focus the conversation. They help focus the speaker's attention on a specific topic;
- Information sharing is increased. You, the listener, gain more information, the speaker's awareness is heightened, and this results in better understanding;
- Probing gives clear direction. Your probing statements and questions help direct the speaker to content you consider important. This can help channel a conversation and get things "unstuck" if they've become stalled;
- Probing statements open up the discussion. You can give the speaker permission to probe ideas and notions he/she thought were too risky or taboo;
- It affects the entire interaction process. This can lead to more open sharing in which each family member feels an important part of the whole.



### **The Parts of Probing**

Probing has three basic parts:

- Identification of a subject that needs more discussion;

You, as the listener, must use some good common sense to identify an area mentioned by the speaker that requires probing. And it is important to remember that probing can only be effective after adequate listening and rephrasing. When these skills are used in order, your probing is likely to be more relationship centered and more effective.

Listener common sense involves, a certain intuition. This intuition is like a "sixth sense," and is a way of gaining information without direct observation. Intuition can be a powerful, useful skill when used with other forms of communication.

- The phrasing of open-ended questions or statements;

The second part of probing is that of phrasing open-ended questions or statements. It is best to use words like "what, where, when, how" when phrasing your questions. Be careful to avoid the word "why" - it usually begins a question that can't be answered easily by the other person, and can lead to defensive behavior and resistance to further suggestions. "Why" can be a trap, and seldom leads to anything productive.

- The reflection of feelings.

The ability to reflect the feelings of another person is a difficult but valuable skill. This skill is best used to probe for feelings. Even though you may think you are quite sure what someone else is feeling, it is often inappropriate or unwise to assume it. A simple, but caring probe might be, "You seem upset, is there something I can do to help?"

### **An Example of Probing**

Rod was just starting out in his business. His income was unpredictable, and getting established as a successful salesman demanded a great deal of time and energy, both physical and emotional. "I would sometimes wake up at night," Rod said, "in a cold sweat because of feeling anxious about whether I would make it as a salesman. I worried about having enough money to make ends meet. Some months I made adequate income and some months I didn't.

I was becoming an emotional wreck, but didn't share my feelings with Sally, I guess because I didn't think it was the macho thing to do. I wanted to appear strong and in control to her. But she wasn't fooled; she's very perceptive. One evening while we were walking in the park she said, 'Rod, you're feeling pretty uptight about how things are going at work aren't you?' I told her I wasn't tense at all and that everything was ok.

She didn't let me off the hook. 'Yes, you are worried,' she insisted, 'and I think it's natural. But I hate to see you feel that way. Let's talk about this and see if the situation is as bad as it seems and what action we can take to make things better.'

At that point I opened up to her and shared all of my frustration and insecurity with her. I felt like a dam had been opened up inside me. I had not talked with anyone about this and it was a great relief to finally get it out. We talked about ways to cut our expenses and things we could do without and not miss too much. Then Sally asked me, 'What would be the worst thing that could possibly happen?' and I answered, 'The worst thing is that I would lose my job.' She then reminded me that if that happened we would still be able to make it on her income and that her job was very stable. We would have to make some changes, but we could make it.

Well, that helped put things in perspective. My sales gradually increased, and today I am one of the top salesmen for the company. But that's not the most important part of the story. The most important part is that on that evening a few years ago, Sally was sensitive enough and interested in me enough to know that I was hurting and needed to talk. She cared enough to initiate the conversation. As a result of talking through that situation I felt closer to Sally than I ever had. I think that established our close bond with each other more than any other single event and it set the pattern for that type of caring, open communication."

### **Positive Speaking**

We humans are unique among animals because of our ability to speak using the meaningful symbols we call words. Words let us communicate quickly and accurately.

However, we often take this ability to communicate for granted, especially in our families. Often we expect family members to know exactly what we want or need without having to say much, or anything, at all.

It is important for all of us to speak to those around us, telling them about our wants and needs. We may think they know what we're thinking, but they really don't. The most they can do is guess, based on their previous experience with us or with others in roles similar to ours.

Most of us don't like to be placed in the position of having to guess what someone else wants or needs. It isn't fair to ask it of others, either.

Strong families understand the importance of speaking clearly and honestly. Family members say what they mean and mean what they say. Their behavior sets the tone for continued meaningful communication, based on valuing and respecting each other. Using positive, supportive words allows you to express yourself as you develop communication skills that can bind people together.

Positive speaking is more than being honest and open; it is letting go of negative thoughts and habits that hinders relationships. Such thoughts and habits, like bullying,

blaming, dominating, and other ways of manipulating people, can destroy individuals and their ability to get close to others.

Positive speaking is being kind. It aims at building relationships by building up the other person. Honesty is part of this kindness, but it is never brutal honesty. The balance between honesty and kindness is crucial.

So what are the payoffs of positive speaking for all of us?

- You have the opportunity to express yourself. If you speak in a positive way, people will listen to you more readily. And that gives you an opportunity to exert influence.
- It helps build a positive self-image. When people listen to what you have to say and take it into consideration doesn't it make you feel better? Doing the same for others makes them feel better, too.
- It builds trust into a relationship. Positive speaking tells people you are not out to manipulate or take advantage of them.
- It encourages cooperation. Just like listening, positive speaking increases cooperation. This leads to opportunities for growth and change.
- It allows for honesty and kindness. This type of honesty is caring, never unkind. It allows love and kindness to work together to promote openness and frankness.

### **The Parts of Positive Speaking**

Positive speaking has four basic parts:

- Focusing on the positive;

Focusing on the positive is a theme you find often in strong families. That's because it is an effective way to promote growth in family relationships.

Focusing on the positive while speaking to others helps put life and relationships in perspective, especially when things seem to be going badly. It reaffirms commitment by showing interest and caring. It says "We are in this together and we are going to win."

- Honesty and kindness;

Honesty is crucial in dealing with relationship issues, but it always must be measured with kindness. Marital therapist, Richard Stuart says uncensored, open communication may be more than any relationship can bear. We can't say hurtful, unkind things simply because we believe them to be true - at least, we can't say them without being prepared for the consequences.

Too often people use the excuse "I'm only being honest" to be brutal, overly critical, and evaluative. This is destructive to relationships and can be used to set one person up as an authority over another.

Strong families understand this and work toward a type of measured honesty that seeks intimacy through kindness. They realize honesty is a good thing, but you can get too much of a good thing. Be careful with honesty; most importantly, be kind.

- Being specific;

Being specific about what you are saying is important because, once again, you don't want to place the other person in the position of having to guess or infer what you mean. It is helpful to talk about one thing at time, and to keep it as much in the present as you can.

Speaking about specific issues is a skill that can greatly enhance your communication. It allows you to focus on one topic at a time while sharing knowledge and information. Being specific is the best way to let others know what you want or expect of them. If you're not specific, you can't be really sure if the other person didn't understand you, or just didn't want to meet your request. Speaking in specific, concrete terms gives you a better idea of how to interpret another's actions.

- Self-disclosure.

Being willing to share personal, important aspects of yourself with others may be the most effective communication skill there is. Self-disclosure means sharing a part of you that has meaning for the relationship at hand.

Self-disclosure in families is important. Family members sometimes assume they know what others in the family are thinking and feeling. Self-disclosure is a good way to share feelings, thoughts and experiences. It lets others know about us and can keep them from jumping to conclusions.

### **Examples of Positive Speaking**

In this example, a husband brags about his wife: "I'd like to brag about my wife just a little; she has such a wonderful attitude and manner. I haven't met very many people who are more intelligent than she; she's a physician - very respected in our community. It would be easy for her to feel just a notch or two above ordinary folks, but she doesn't. I'm sure there are people who wonder what it's like to live with her. I can tell you she never makes me feel defensive or inferior. I always feel she genuinely values me."

A mother says: "We practice our manners at home, too. 'Please' and 'thank you' are as important there as at school or work. If one of us is going to be late, we let the family

know; it's just common courtesy. It would be stupid not to be as considerate and as pleasant to family as we are to strangers."

A husband talks about being specific: "For a long time I was angry at my wife because I thought she was spending money too freely. I'd complain that she was spending too much. She'd say she couldn't cut corners any more than she was. Finally during one fight, she said, 'Just tell me how to spend less.' I began by saying that she did a good job on groceries, she didn't splurge on gifts or things for herself, but she could spend a lot less on clothes for the children. Suddenly it hit me that that was my real gripe - she spent too much on the children's clothing. I said to her, 'I believe that is what really bothers me.' She suggested she could choose less expensive shops for the kids' clothes - maybe even use the second-hand store. It was rather funny. When I could narrow it down to my real gripe, she and I could deal with it."

### **Setting Up a Family Council**

What better way is there to practice communication skills than by setting up a family council? A family sitting down together and talking about important issues is not a new idea. However, it may never have been so needed as in our present day.

#### **Ask yourselves these questions:**

- Do you treat family members as well as you treat your best friend?
- Does each member of your family have equal status as a valued person?
- Does everyone share in the planning and doing of family chores?
- Are decisions that affect family members shared by all concerned?
- Do you want to create feelings of trust, competency and independence in all family members?

If you answer any of the first four questions with a "no", and the last question with a "yes", you may want to consider having a regular family council.

Families need a regular time set aside for the purpose of settling disputes, making decisions and adjusting to the changes that are part of everyday family life.

#### **A family council is not:**

- A discussion meeting around the dinner table;
- A discussion while driving the car;
- A meeting called only when there is a problem.

#### **A family council is:**

- A gathering of everyone in the family at a designated time and place;
- A meeting that has a chairperson and a recorder (each member takes a turn as chairperson, but only those who can read and write take turns being recorder);
- A meeting with fixed rules of procedures;
- A cooperative way of making decisions that affects all family members.

**Here's how it works:**

A meeting is called, the issues are faced, and all the members have a chance to say what they think and/or feel. All possible solutions are considered and the discussion continues until a solution emerges that is acceptable to each family member. This doesn't mean they each like it, but each is willing to live with it for a period of time to see if it works. Each person is expected to support the decision and work for its success.

**The fringe benefits of holding a family council are:**

- Parents get to be leaders not "bosses" - children also learn to lead;
- When conflicts come, the best possible solution is close at hand;
- Family members learn to listen with open ears and also with an "open" heart;
- Agreement is reached by consensus, a solution that all can feel good about;
- Everyone gets to hear the facts - this makes shared decisions possible;
- Family members help each other keep a balance between reason and emotion.

**Guidelines for the Family Council:**

1. Meet at a regularly scheduled time and begin on time. Give this time a high priority.
2. Share the responsibilities of chairperson and recorder whenever possible. Let everyone be heard.
3. Keep an accurate record of the meeting.
4. Set a specific time for the meeting to last. Thirty to sixty minutes depending on the age of the children. Stop on time!

5. Encourage all members to participate in positive, constructive ways; don't just let them gripe. Focus on real issues.
6. Family decisions and problem solving are important, but plan for some fun and recreation, too.
7. Record all agreements and put them into action as soon as possible. Post agreements as a reminder.
8. End each council with something that is fun and affirms family members like a family hug, a short game, a favorite television program or anything that leaves a positive experience with members.

### **Hang in there!**

The family council takes time and hard work to establish. Don't get too discouraged if it's hard going at first. Hang in there - it will pay off in time.

Adapted from Herb Lingren and Eileen Curry's Building a Family Council (1985)

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MEMORANDUM HISTORY: